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# PHSB STUDIES

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## HEALTH CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULTS IN NORTH CAROLINA'S HEALTH SERVICE AREAS

For the second consecutive year, a sample survey conducted by the North Carolina Division of State Budget and Management provides data regarding the demographic, health and economic characteristics of the state's household population. Named the North Carolina Citizen Survey (NCCS), the survey was conducted during September and October of each of the years 1976 and 1977.

Details concerning the 1976 survey design and methodology have been reported (1). Briefly, a stratified random sample with proportional allocation was selected from the prior year's state income tax returns and listings of residents eligible for Medicaid assistance. After elimination of duplicate household listings, a cross-section of adults was then questioned by telephone or in-person interview. A similar survey design was used in 1977 when the sampling frame included 96 percent of the household estimate for 1977 and the final sample included 1,400 households, each with a single respondent 18 or older (2).

The representativeness of the 1976 sample is discussed elsewhere (1). Again in 1977, the sample tends to underrepresent adult males, particularly in the Cardinal HSA. Compared to other estimates, both samples also appear to overrepresent middle-aged persons and underrepresent young adults to some extent. Although urban-rural identifiers changed from one survey period to the other, and with neither conforming to Census definitions, there is also some evidence that the 1976 sample overrepresented urban households while the 1977 sample appears biased towards rurality. This may explain some of the difference between 1976 and 1977 estimates of certain health characteristics. Except for possible urban-rural differences, however, chi-square tests applied to the statewide demographic data for 1976 and 1977 revealed no statistically significant differences between surveys.

In favor of more employment data and new information concerning citizens' attitudes towards government, the 1977 survey included fewer health questions than did the 1976 survey. However, a number of key indicators of health problems and health care utilization were common to both surveys, and the 1977 survey instrument solicited some new and important health-related information, for example, availability of health insurance and citizens' use of cigarettes and alcoholic beverages.

This report purports to highlight results of the 1977 survey and, where applicable, present corresponding estimates for 1976 (3). Except for Table 3 where the number of respondents (N) is given, 1976 results are based on 1,380 responses while 1977 results are based on 1,400 responses. In 1977, responses were distributed according to the following HSA totals: Western (261), Piedmont (278), Southern Piedmont (224), Capital (197), Cardinal (198) and Eastern (242). These figures are similar to those obtained in 1976.

In the computation of percentages, unknown and missing values generally have not been allocated to a response category; they are included only in the denominator.